

NOAA'S INTERNATIONAL CORAL REEF CONSERVATION

The U.S. Coral Reef Action Plan called on the U.S. to exercise global leadership in shaping and developing environmentally sound and comprehensive coral reef policy, strengthen international conventions and foster strategic partnerships with other countries, international organizations and institutions, the public and private sectors, and non-governmental organizations to address international threats to coral reef ecosystems. Elements of NOAA's international activities include:

INTERNATIONAL CORAL REEF GRANTS

NOAA supports international coral reef conservation activities through the following funding mechanisms:



Globally, we estimate that almost half a billion people live within 100 kilometers of a coral reef, benefiting from the production and protection these ecosystems provide. *Reefs at Risk, World Resources Institute, 1998*



Many reefs lost in 1998 as a result of the bleaching associated with El Nino should recover, with some clear evidence of slow recovery. *Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2000, Clive Wilkinson*

NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program

The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program supports activities to protect and conserve coral reef ecosystems. Grant applicants include governmental and non-governmental organizations and academic institutions. In 2002, the Program will provide \$300,000 to nine international projects, addressing such themes as community participation in monitoring, management effectiveness of marine protected areas (MPAs), socio-economic assessments, and regional approaches to promote MPA networks.

Coral Reef Conservation Fund

The Coral Reef Conservation Fund is a partnership between NOAA and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to support coral reef conservation efforts that reduce and prevent degradation of coral reefs and associated reef habitats. The Fund provides matching grants for projects that help build public-private partnerships to address causes of coral reef degradation wherever they occur, from inland areas to coastal watersheds to the reefs and surrounding marine environment. In 2001, NFWF provided 11 grants totaling \$300,000 for international coral reef conservation, which leveraged substantial additional resources from the private sector. The program was renewed in 2002 and applications are currently under review.

GLOBAL CORAL REEF MONITORING NETWORK (GCRMN)

NOAA and other U.S. agencies continue to be leading contributors to the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network. At the global level, the NOAA continues its strong support for the GCRMN biennial publication, "Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2002," which will be published in November 2002. Further, NOAA provides leadership to the development of socioeconomic protocols to better assess the human dimension of management of coral reef ecosystems. At the regional level, NOAA gives priority to continued support to expanding monitoring networks in the wider Caribbean and Pacific regions. These efforts are intended to engage communities in monitoring efforts that will advance public awareness and inform local and national policy debate on coral reef conservation and management. At the national level, the U.S. is implementing a comprehensive monitoring and assessment program and will publish its first report, "The State of Coral Reef Ecosystems of the United States and Pacific Freely Associated States" in August 2002, to be incorporated into the GCRMN overview.



SAFEGUARDS FOR NAVIGATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The International Maritime Organization (IMO), a Specialized Agency of the United Nations that addresses issues relating to international shipping, took a historic step in 2000 by creating a new measure under international law for the establishment of "No Anchoring Areas." This measure, which is based on a proposal by the U.S. Government, allows any country to submit proposals to the IMO for designation of "no anchoring areas" where anchoring is hazardous to a ship or could result in unacceptable damage to the marine environment, including coral reefs and other valuable marine ecosystems. At the same time that it created this measure, IMO approved the adoption of three mandatory no anchoring areas to protect the fragile coral reefs of Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary (FGBNMS). The United States subsequently submitted yet another proposal for three mandatory "no anchoring areas" to protect the fragile coral reefs of the Dry Tortugas in Florida. The IMO recently adopted these measures on May 24, 2002. The IMO has only adopted three mandatory routing measures in its history, two of these are the "no anchoring areas" for FGBNMS and the Tortugas.



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